(c) to what extent is the Tobacco Board helping farmers in growing Virginia tobacco this year;

(d) what steps will Government take to ensure that Virginia tobacco is encouraged in various states to help farmers; and

(e) what are the reasons for/lack of funding by Tobacco Board for improving this crop?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) As per the provisions of the Tobacco Board Act, the Board plans and regulates crop size of FCV tobacco every year, keeping in view the demand to ensure remunerative prices to the farmers. Production regulation is essential to balance the supply-demand matrix to ensure a fair and remunerative price to farmers.

(c) and (d) The Tobacco Board facilitates supplies of major inputs like seeds, coal and fertilizers to tobacco growers, implements various extension and developmental schemes on subsidy basis, and disseminates the latest technology on crop production.

(e) Year after year the production of FCV tobacco is far in excess of the crop size fixed by the Tobacco Board and there is no lack of funding of various schemes being run by the Tobacco Board for improving the yield & quality of tobacco.

Protectionist Policies of US Government

752. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether of late the U.S. Government while pressing for the opening of World Markets for her exporters is pursuing extremely protectionist policies preventing the access of the domestic market for the foreign countries;

(b) if so, details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to correct the market distortions as a result of the U.S. policy and the extent of the success achieved therein?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (c) Indo-US bilateral trade is registering good levels of growth and India's exports to US rose by 19.28% in 2004-05. This trend is also continuing in the current year.

Issues that are affecting our market access that can bring about a further rise in our exports are being taken up from time to time with the concerned US authorities. They were also taken up at the recently held Indo-US Trade Policy Forum Meeting in New Delhi on November 12, 2005 which was co-chaired by the US Trade Representative Robert Portman and Shri Kamal Nath, Minister, Commerce & Industry.

Investments from Japanese Companies

753. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has recently invited investments from Japanese companies; and

(b) if so, the areas in which the investment have sought and the reaction of the Japanese companies in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) The Government of India, in association with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry and Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, organized "Doordarshan India" seminar in Tokyo, Japan on April 13, 2005. The Seminar focused on investment opportunities in various sectors and aimed at creating awareness on the investment climate in India.

Another seminar on Investment Opportunities in Madhya Pradesh was organized by the Government of Madhya Pradesh in association with the Government of India on September 19, 2005 with the objective of disseminating information on investment opportunities for Japanese companies in various sectors in the state of Madhya Pradesh.

Rejection of Export consignments

754. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that India again tops the list of rejection of food and drug export consignments;

(b) whether it is a fact that the US rejected as many as 256 food export consignments in August 2005 on grounds of sanitary, phytosanitary (SPS) and technical parameters;

(c) whether it is a fact, there are cases of rejection of products from developed countries like Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, New Zealand and UK also; and